

REMARKS

In the final Office Action, the Examiner objected to claim 1 for containing informalities. Applicants have amended claim 1—as suggested by the Examiner—and request the Examiner withdraw this objection.

Further, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 2, 5-8, 11, 12, and 14-20 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,135,809 to Asakawa (“Asakawa”) and rejected claims 3, 4, 9, 10, and 13 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Asakawa in view of U.S. Patent No 6,231,360 to Horie (“Horie”).

With regard to the § 102(e) and § 103(a) rejections, the Examiner stated:

“Asakawa discloses a card connector comprising: a pair of guide grooves (see following figure) formed on both sidewalls of a connector housing (2); and sidewalls (see following fig.) to define, below a space between the pair of guide grooves, and a base plate with a plurality of contact terminals arranged in the base plate to couple with contact of a bottom surface of a card. Please note that recitations of the intended use of the claimed invention must result in a structural difference between the claimed invention and the prior art in order to patentably distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art. If the prior art structure is capable of performing the intended use, then it meets the claim.”

Final Office Action, pages 2 and 3. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejections because the card connector 1 of Asakawa is not configured to accommodate the first card, as recited.

The structure of Asakawa does not disclose side walls to define, below a space between the pair of guide grooves, **a space in which to accommodate the lower body portion of the first card**. Applicants respectfully refer to Figs. 1-3 of Asakawa,

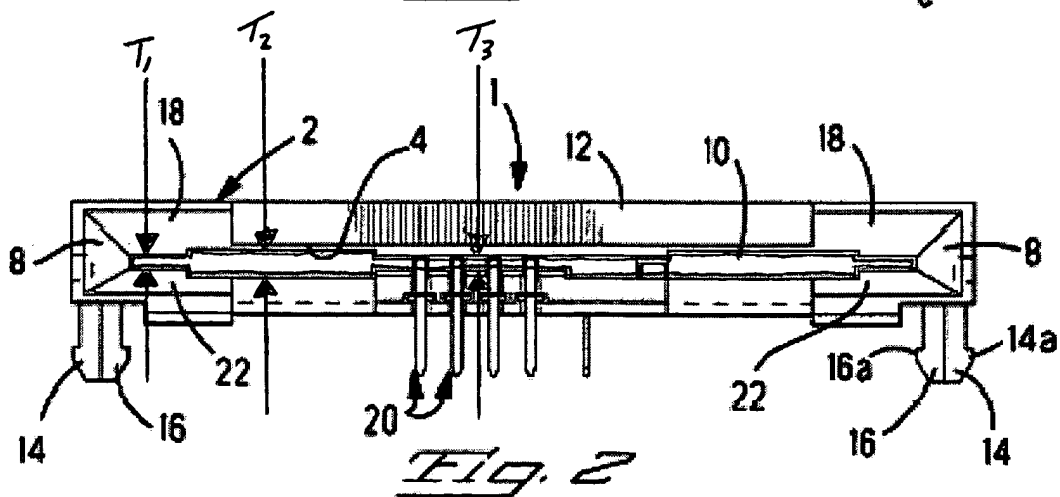
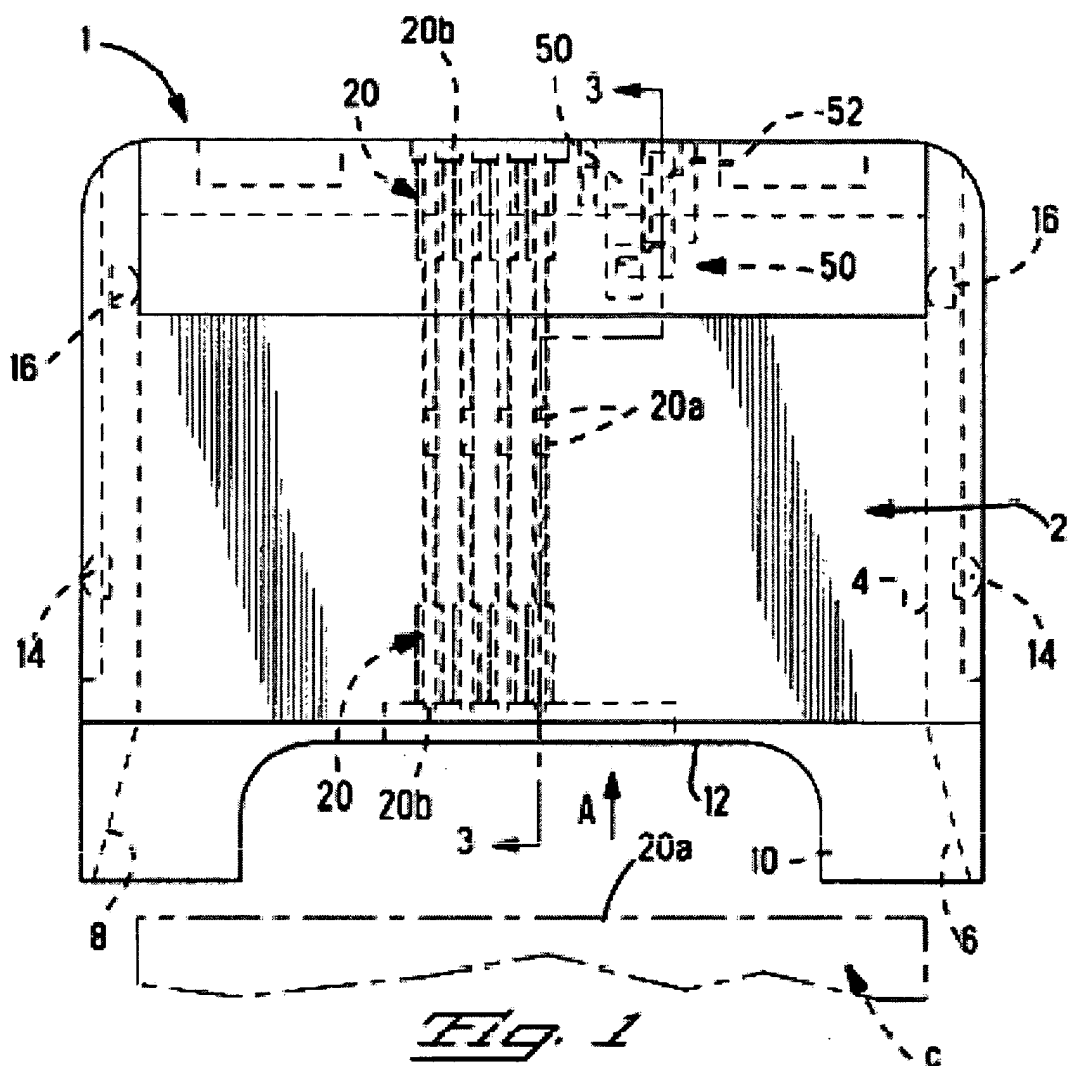
copies of which are included with this Amendment for the Examiner's convenience. Fig. 1 of Asakawa is a top plan view of card connector 1, Fig. 2 is a front view along arrow A of the card connector 1 of Fig. 1, and Fig. 3 is a cross-sectional view of the card connector 1 taken along line 3—3 of Fig. 1.

Applicants submit that the structure of Asakawa lacks a space between the pair of guide grooves capable of accommodating the lower body portion of the first card, as recited in the claims. Applicants submit that partition 28 of Asakawa, highlighted in Fig. 3 for the Examiner's convenience, precludes the insertion of the first card with a lower body portion. Applicants submit that any attempt to insert the first card of the pending claims into card connector 1 of Asakawa would fail because partition 28 would obstruct insertion of the first card.

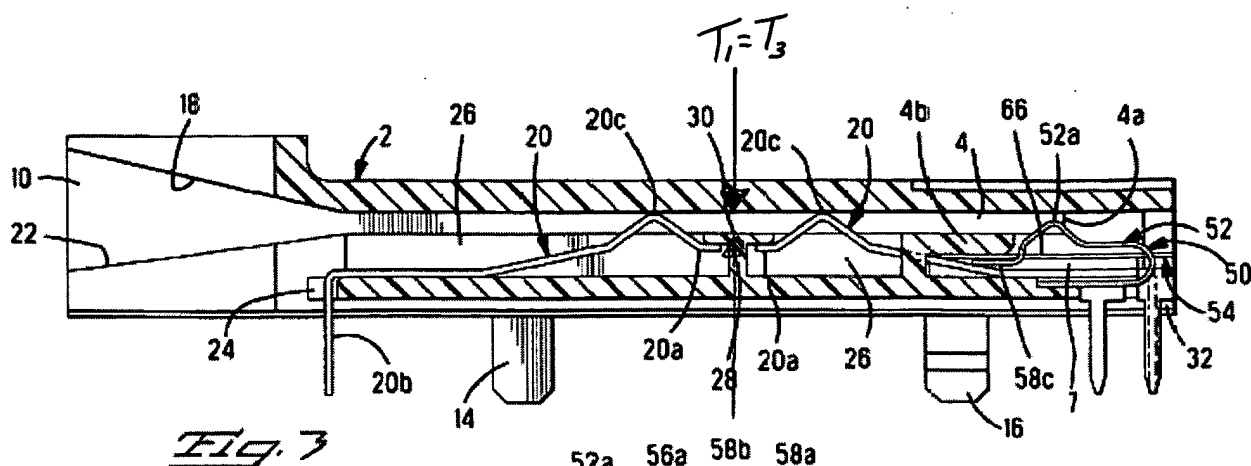
To better illustrate the structural distinctions of Asakawa, Applicants assign thicknesses T_1 , T_2 , and T_3 to the different thicknesses of card-receiving slot 4 of Asakawa. Although thickness T_2 is greater than thickness T_1 , card-receiving slot 4 of Asakawa is neither configured to nor capable of accommodating the lower body portion of the first card, as recited in the claims. Partition 28, which is illustrated in Fig. 3 of Asakawa, narrows card-receiving slot 4 opening to thickness T_3 , so that the middle of card-receiving slot 4 has the same thickness as T_1 . Because thickness T_1 equals thickness T_3 , card insertion slot 4 of Asakawa precludes the insertion of the first card with a lower body portion, as recited in the pending claims.

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Additionally, Horie fails to overcome the above-noted deficiencies of Asakawa and is not relied upon for such teaching.

For these reasons, Applicants submit that the §§ 102(e) and 103(a) rejections should be withdrawn.

Conclusion

Applicants respectfully request that this Amendment under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 be entered by the Examiner, placing claims 1-20 in condition for allowance. Applicants submit that the proposed amendments of claim 1 do not raise new issues or necessitate the undertaking of any additional search of the art by the Examiner, since they merely address the claim objections raised by the Examiner. Therefore, this Amendment should allow for immediate action by the Examiner.

Furthermore, Applicants respectfully point out that the final action set forth new grounds of rejection based on newly-cited Asakawa. It is respectfully submitted that the

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present Amendment should be entered so as to provide Applicants with a full and fair opportunity to respond to the new rejections and place the application in condition for allowance.

Applicants respectfully request the entry of this Amendment, the Examiner's reconsideration of the application, and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

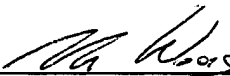
The Examiner is invited to call the undersigned at (202) 408-4157 if the Examiner deems that a telephone conversation would further the prosecution of the application.

Please grant any extension of time needed to enter this reply and charge any needed fees to our Deposit Account No. 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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By: 
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